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REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 1-4, 7 and 8 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-4, 7 and 8 have been rejected.

Claim 1 has been amended.

Claims 3 and 4 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims add no new matter. Support to these amendments can be found in the specification in page 5, lines 1-9 and in the drawings in Figs. 1b, 3a, 3b and 4a.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Morris (US 4,889,167). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the remarks that follow.

With respect to Claim 1, The Examiner has stated that "Morris discloses in a pipe clamp 10 for pipe repair, and a flexible inner sleeve disposed inside said clamping band, the flexible inner sleeve carries an array of depressions 22 over most of its inner face, the improvement being the provisions of a reinforcing material 23a bonded to flexible inner

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sleeve 18 or embedded therein to inhibit axial expansion thereof when the inner sleeve is under compression ...". In response to Applicant's arguments filed on March 7, 2006, The Examiner has stated that "Applicant argues that Morris fails to disclose a reinforcing material that inhibits circumferential expansion". However, this is a misinterpretation of Applicants' arguments of March 7, 2006. Applicants argued on March 7, 2006, and still argue, that Morris discloses reinforcement force which may merely inhibit circumferential expansion, as opposed to "to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve" recited in independent claim 1. The Examiner further states that "Morris discloses that fibers 23a supply a tensile component, the tensile component would resist axial expansion of the sleeve". Applicants respectfully disagree. Morris discloses "The material for the outer layer of the tensile component is comprised of a scrim or weave 23a of fibers or cord encased or sandwiched, as shown in FIG. 5 ..." Col. 3, lines 12-15. Fig. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 5--5 of FIG. 2. It is clear from Fig. 5, when taken in conjunction with Fig. 2, that the fibers of "scrim or weave 23a" encircle the circumference of the "pipe repair device 10" and thus may provide reinforcement force which may merely inhibit circumferential expansion, as opposed to "to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve" recited in independent claim 1. Yet, Morris fails to disclose or suggest "comprising a reinforcing material embedded within said inner sleeve, fibers of said reinforcing material are parallel to axis of said pipe clamp or coupling to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve when said inner sleeve is under compression between said pipes and said clamping band" as recited in independent claim 1, as amended. For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach all elements of the claim. Therefore, Morris cannot anticipate claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 1 is allowable.

Additionally, Morris discloses "...tensile component 20 is shown as comprised of an outer layer which overlies and is bonded to an inner layer which comprises the elastomeric component. The material for the outer layer of the tensile component is comprised of a scrim or weave 23a of fibers or cord encased or sandwiched, as shown in FIG. 5..." Col. 3, lines 9-15. Therefore "scrim or weave 23a" is bonded to "elastomeric component 18", as opposed to "a reinforcing material embedded within said inner sleeve" recited in independent claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Morris fails to disclose or suggest "comprising a reinforcing material embedded within said inner sleeve, fibers of said reinforcing material are parallel to axis of

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said pipe clamp or coupling to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve when said inner sleeve is under compression between said pipes and said clamping band” as recited in independent claim 1, as amended. For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach all elements of the claim. Therefore, Morris cannot anticipate claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 1 is allowable.

Additionally, Morris fails to disclose or suggest “said flexible inner sleeve is provided with sealing lips protruding from said inner face and integral to said flexible inner sleeve on its inner face to contact said at least one of said pipes, said sealing lips are made to form circumferential sealing ring around said at least one of said pipes, and wherein said sealing lips are formed with edges which bent down and sideward when in contact with said at least one of said pipes to increase sealing of said sealing lips when liquid fills depressions on the sides of said sealing lips” as recited in independent claim 1, as amended. For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach all elements of the claim. Therefore, Morris cannot anticipate claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2, 7 and 8 depend from claim 1, and therefore include all the limitations of this claim. At least for this reason, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 2, 7 and 8 are likewise allowable.

Claims 3 and 4 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to amended independent claim 1 and to claims 2, 7 and 8 dependent thereon.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Schmidt (US 6,070,914). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the remarks that follow.

With respect to Claim 1, The Examiner has stated that Schmidt discloses “a reinforcing material 13a (Fig.13) bonded to the flexible inner sleeve 13b (see col. 5, lines 45-48)”. Applicants respectfully disagree. In Col. 5, lines 45-48, Schmidt refers to the alloy of Ring part 13a (see col. 5, lines 40-50) and does not disclose a flexible inner sleeve.

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Additionally, Schmidt discloses “ring parts 13b may be adhesively bonded in groove 16 of ring parts 13a”. Therefore, Ring parts 13b (which the Examiner compares to the inner sleeve of the present application) do not comprise “a reinforcing material embedded within said inner sleeve, fibers of said reinforcing material are parallel to axis of said pipe clamp or coupling to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve when said inner sleeve is under compression between said pipes and said clamping band” as recited in independent claim 1, as amended. Therefore, Schmidt fails to disclose, teach or suggest at least “a flexible inner sleeve disposed inside said clamping band, said flexible inner sleeve carries an array of depressions over most of its inner face, the improvement comprising a reinforcing material embedded within said inner sleeve, fibers of said reinforcing material are parallel to axis of said pipe clamp or coupling to inhibit axial expansion of said inner sleeve when said inner sleeve is under compression between said pipes and said clamping band”. For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach all elements of the claim. Therefore, Schmidt cannot anticipate claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 1 is allowable.

Additionally, The Examiner has stated that Schmidt discloses “flexible sealing lips (20 in fig. 13 or 23 in fig. 16)”. Applicants respectfully disagree. Schmidt discloses “clamping ring 13 has a plurality of ribs 23 that extend over its inner circumference and taper radially inward” (col. 5 lines 11-12 and 53-55). Schmidt fails to disclose or suggest “said flexible inner sleeve is provided with sealing lips protruding from said inner face and integral to said flexible inner sleeve on its inner face to contact said at least one of said pipes, said sealing lips are made to form circumferential sealing ring around said at least one of said pipes, and wherein said sealing lips are formed with edges which bent down and toward depressions in the sides of said sealing lips when in contact with said at least one of said pipes to increase sealing of said sealing lips when liquid fills said depressions on the sides of said sealing lips” as recited in independent claim 1, as amended. For a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach all elements of the claim. Therefore, Schmidt cannot anticipate claim 1, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 1 is allowable.

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Claims 7 and 8 depend from claim 1, and therefore include all the limitations of this claim. At least for this reason, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 7 and 8 are likewise allowable.

Claims 3 and 4 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. In making this cancellation without prejudice, Applicants reserve all rights in these claims to file divisional and/or continuation patent applications.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections to amended independent claim 1 and to claims 7 and 8 thereon.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Schmidt.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 2 under Schmidt.

Claim 1 is allowable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claim 2 depends from claim 1, and therefore includes all the limitations of this claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 2 is likewise allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claim 2.

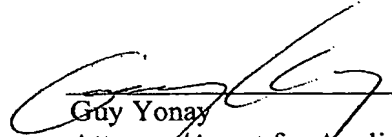
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the pending claims are deemed to be allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

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Please charge any fees associated with this paper to deposit account No. 50-3355.

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